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Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies

Summary

In its resolution 66/253, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a comprehensive report on the promotion of equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the system for the election of treaty body members and an analysis of the current membership of each treaty body, by geographical region.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/153, the General Assembly encouraged the States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments to consider and adopt concrete actions, inter alia, the possible establishment of quota distribution systems by geographical region for the election of the members of the treaty bodies, thereby ensuring the paramount objective of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of those human rights bodies. In the same resolution, the Assembly urged the States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments, including the bureau members, to include this matter in the agenda of each meeting and/or Conference of States Parties to those instruments in order to initiate a debate on ways and means to ensure equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, based on previous recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council and the provisions of the same resolution. The Assembly also recommended, when considering the possible establishment of a quota by region for the election of the membership of each treaty body, the introduction of flexible procedures that would encompass the following criteria: (a) each of the five regional groups established by the General Assembly must be assigned a quota of the membership of each treaty body in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the instrument that it represents; (b) there must be provision for periodic revisions that reflect the relative changes in the geographical distribution of States parties; and (c) automatic periodic revisions should be envisaged in order to avoid amending the text of the instrument when the quotas are revised. The Assembly stressed that the process needed to achieve the goal of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of human rights treaty bodies could contribute to raising awareness of the importance of gender balance, the representation of the principal legal systems and the principle that the members of the treaty bodies should be elected and should serve in their personal capacity, and should be of high moral character, acknowledged impartiality and recognized competence in the field of human rights.

2. The Chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies were requested to consider, at their next meeting, the content of resolution 66/153 and to submit, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, specific recommendations for the achievement of the goal of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, as well as an update on the implementation of the resolution by their respective bodies. The High Commissioner was requested to submit concrete recommendations on the implementation of the resolution and the Secretary-General was requested to submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

3. The present report is submitted in response to that request and provides an analysis of the current composition of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies.

II. Human rights treaty bodies

4. Nine of the ten international human rights treaties provide for the creation of a committee of experts to carry out the functions delineated in the treaty and, where relevant, its optional protocols. Accordingly:

(a) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, began work in 1970;

(b) The Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, began work in 1977 and is invested with functions by the Covenant and its two Optional Protocols;

(c) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, began work in 1982 and is invested with functions by the Convention and its Optional Protocol;

(d) The Committee against Torture, established under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, began work in 1987;

(e) The Committee on the Rights of the Child began work in 1991 and oversees implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols;[1]

(f) The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, established under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, began work in 2004;

(g) The Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, began work in 2007;

(h) The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, began work in 2009; and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), established under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, began work in 2011.

5. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights does not provide for the creation of a treaty body but gives the Economic and Social Council a general mandate to oversee the implementation of the Covenant by States parties and United Nations specialized agencies through the consideration of reports. In 1978, the Council created the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the implementation of the Covenant to assist it in considering the reports submitted by States parties (decision 1978/10). The composition of the Sessional Working Group was amended by the Council in 1985 (resolution 1985/17) and it was renamed the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee, which is treated as a treaty body, first met in 1987. Subsequently, the Human Rights Council has called for the regularization of the Committee so that its establishment is consistent with other treaty bodies (resolution 4/7).

[1] The third Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the Individual Communications, is envisaged to enter into force with the 10th ratification of the Optional Protocol.

III. Election of members of the human rights treaty bodies

6. With the exception of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, whose elections are governed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, the elections of members of treaty bodies are governed by provisions set out in each treaty (art. 8, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; arts. 28-34, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; art. 17, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; art. 17, Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; art. 43, Convention on the Rights of the Child; art. 72, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; arts. 5-9, Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; art. 34, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and art. 26, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance).

7. In accordance with these provisions, each Committee is composed of independent experts, ranging in number from 10 to 23, with provisions for an expansion of the membership being included in several treaties (up to a maximum of 14 under art. 72, para. 1 (b) of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; up to a maximum of 25 under art. 5, para. 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and up to a maximum of 18 under art. 34, para. 2, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

8. Experts are nominated and elected by States parties to the treaty concerned by secret ballot. They serve for four-year terms, and, except in the case of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which allow for the renomination of members only once, the treaties do not limit the number of times a member's term may be renewed. With the exception of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which allow for the nomination of two candidates by each State party, all treaties limit the number of nominees to one. Candidates must be nationals of the nominating State party, except in the case of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entitles States parties to nominate a candidate who is a national of another State party where it nominates two candidates. The other candidate must be a national of the State party, and before it nominates a national of another State party, the nominating State must obtain the consent of the other State party (art. 6).

9. Where the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is concerned, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1985/17, provides that the Committee shall consist of 18 members who shall be elected by the Council by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties to the Covenant. Members serve for four-year terms and are eligible for re-election if nominated. The elections of members in respect of all other treaty bodies are held at biennial meetings of the States parties, or in the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, at a Conference of States parties of the treaties concerned. In all cases, in order to avoid

the change of the entire membership, the terms of half of the members elected at the first election are limited to two years, following which elections occur every two years.

A. Qualifications for nomination as members

10. The qualifications expected of nominees, set out in the treaties and in Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, vary. In general, members are required to be of recognized competence and of high moral standing and acknowledged impartiality. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also indicates that consideration should be given to the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience (art. 28, para. 2), while the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provides that, in nominating candidates, States parties should bear in mind the usefulness of nominating persons who are also members of the Human Rights Committee and who are willing to serve on the Committee against Torture (art. 17, para. 2). The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment indicates that members should have proven professional experience in the field of the administration of justice, in particular criminal law, prison or police administration, or in the various fields relevant to persons deprived of their liberty (art. 5, para. 2). In the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties are invited to give due consideration to article 4, paragraph 3, when nominating candidates (art. 34, para. 3). This requires States parties to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the Convention and other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities. All treaties and Council resolution 1985/17 indicate that members should serve in a personal capacity.

B. Criteria for election of members

11. The treaties and Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 provide criteria for States in election of members of treaty bodies. In all cases, consideration must be given to equitable geographical distribution. Additional considerations include representation of the principal legal systems (Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); the different forms of social and legal systems (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights); different forms of civilization (Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); different forms of civilization and legal systems of the States parties (Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment); and legal experience (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

12. The newer treaties provide explicit provisions relating to gender balance. Thus, in the composition of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, due

consideration is to be given to "balanced gender representation on the basis of the principles of equality and non-discrimination" (art. 5, para. 4). Where the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is concerned, States parties are also required to give consideration to balanced gender representation and participation of experts with disabilities. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance also requires due consideration to be given to balanced gender representation (art. 26, para. 1).

13. Allocation of membership on a regional basis applies only in the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 providing that 15 seats on the Committee will be equally distributed among the regional groups, while the additional 3 seats will be allocated in accordance with the increase in the total number of States parties per regional group.

C. Replacement of members

14. All treaties contain provision for the replacement of any members who resign or die before the end of their term. In most cases, the State party that nominated the former member appoints another expert from among its nationals to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term, subject in certain cases to the approval of the relevant treaty body (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Committee on the Rights of the Child and Committee on Migrant Workers). In the case of the Committee against Torture, this is subject to the approval of other States parties. Replacement in these cases has no impact on the existing geographical distribution of the committee concerned. However, article 34 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires vacancies on the Human Rights Committee to result in a new round of nominations and elections, provided at least six months are left before the expiration of the term. Although this may result in a change in the geographical composition of the Committee, in practice, the nationality of the member has changed only once on the occasions when members of the Committee have been replaced, with the replacement being from the same regional group as the original member.

IV. The five regional groups

15. According to an unofficial list compiled on the basis of the practice of States in elections at the General Assembly (see annex), the current composition of the regional groups recognized by the General Assembly is:

African States	54 States
Asian States	52 States
Eastern European States	23 States
Latin American and Caribbean States	33 States
Western European and other States	29 States
Not members of a regional group	2 States
Total	**193 States**

16. The practice of certain States with regard to regional groups differs for the purposes of elections and for other functions. Thus, for the purpose of elections, Turkey votes with the Western European group although it is also a member of the Asian group.

17. The Cook Islands, the Holy See and Niue are parties to one or more of the treaties but are not members of the United Nations.

V. The five regional groups

18. Currently, 172 individual experts from 86 countries are serving as a member of the treaty bodies. The membership of each treaty body varies, ranging from 10 to 23 (see table 1).

Table 1
Membership of human rights treaty bodies

Committee	*Membership*
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18
Human Rights Committee	18
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23
Committee against Torture	10
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18
Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers	14
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture	25
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10
Total	**172**

A. Current status of geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

19. The current status of the geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies indicates that the Western European and others group (WEOG) is the biggest, with 47 members (27.3 per cent), followed by the African group, with 39 members (22.7 per cent); the Asian group, with 30 members (17.4 per cent); the group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), with 33 members (19.2 per cent); and the Eastern European group, with 23 members (13.4 per cent) (see table 2).

20. Relative to the level of treaty ratification by member States per regional group, it appears that the African and Asian groups are underrepresented in the membership while WEOG is overrepresented. The representation of GRULAC and the Eastern European group in the membership of the treaty bodies appears to be proportionate to the level of ratifications.

Table 2
Geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

Region	*Number of members (per cent)*	*Number of ratifications (per cent)*
Africa	39 (22.7)	451 (27.6)
Asia	30 (17.4)	377 (23.1)
Eastern Europe	23 (13.4)	228 (14.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	33 (19.2)	298 (18.2)
Western European and others	47 (27.3)	270 (16.5)
Non-member States	–	9 (0.6)
Total	**172 (100.0)**	**1 633 (100.0)**

21. The geographical distribution of membership relative to the level of treaty ratification, when examined by committee, indicates that (see table 3): (a) on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, WEOG is overrepresented; (b) on the Human Rights Committee, the Asian group is much underrepresented and WEOG is overrepresented; (c) on the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African group is underrepresented and GRULAC and the Eastern European groups are overrepresented; (d) on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, WEOG is overrepresented and the African group is underrepresented; (e) on the Committee against Torture, WEOG is overrepresented; (f) on the Committee on the Rights of the Child, WEOG and the Eastern European group are overrepresented; (g) on the Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers, GRULAC is underrepresented relative to its proportion of ratifications; (h) on the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, the African and the Eastern European groups are underrepresented; (i) on the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, WEOG and GRULAC are overrepresented and the African and Asian groups are underrepresented; and (j) on the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, WEOG and the Asian group are overrepresented.

Table 3
Ratifications and membership of each treaty body, by regional group
(With percentage of total)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination		
Last election of members held on 3 June 2013[a]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	176
Africa	5 (27.8)	51 (29.0)
Asia	3 (16.7)	40 (22.7)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	23 (13.1)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (16.7)	32 (18.2)
Western European and others	5 (27.8)	29 (16.5)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.5)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Human Rights Committee		
Last election of members held on 6 September 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	167
Africa	5 (27.8)	51 (30.5)
Asia	1 (5.6)	35 (20.9)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	23 (13.8)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (16.7)	29 (17.4)
Western European and others	7 (38.9)	29 (17.4)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights		
Last election of members held on 26-27 April 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	160
Africa	4 (22.2)	48 (30.0)
Asia	4 (22.2)	35 (21.9)
Eastern Europe	3 (16.7)	23 (14.4)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (22.2)	27 (16.9)
Western European and others	3 (16.7)	27 (16.9)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women		
Last election of members held on 26 June 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	23	187
Africa	5 (21.7)	51 (27.3)
Asia	6 (26.1)	51 (27.3)
Eastern Europe	3 (13.0)	23 (12.3)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (13.0)	33 (17.6)
Western European and others	6 (26.1)	28 (15.0)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.5)
Committee against Torture		
Last election of members held on 18 October 2011[6]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	10	153
Africa	3 (30.0)	43 (28.1)
Asia	1 (10.0)	34 (22.2)
Eastern Europe	1 (10.0)	23 (15.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	1 (10.0)	23 (15.0)
Western European and others	4 (40.0)	29 (19.0)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.7)
Committee on the Rights of the Child		
Last election of members held on 18 December 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	193
Africa	4 (22.2)	52 (26.9)
Asia	4 (22.2)	54 (28.0)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Eastern Europe	3 (16.7)	23 (11.9)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	2 (11.1)	33 (17.1)
Western European and others	5 (27.8)	28 (14.5)
Non-member States	–	3 (1.6)
Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers		
Last election of members held on December 2009[c]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	14	46
Africa	6 (42.9)	17 (37.0)
Asia	2 (14.3)	8 (17.4)
Eastern Europe	1 (7.1)	3 (6.5)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (28.6)	17 (37.0)
Western European and others	1 (7.1)	1 (2.2)
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture		
Last election of members held on 25 October 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	25	68
Africa	2 (8.0)	12 (17.6)
Asia	4 (16.0)	8 (11.8)
Eastern Europe	5 (20.0)	18 (26.5)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	7 (28.0)	14 (20.6)
Western European and others	7 (28.0)	16 (23.5)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities		
Last election of members held on 12-14 September 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	131
Africa	3 (16.7)	34 (26.0)
Asia	3 (16.7)	31 (23.7)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	21 (16.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (22.2)	24 (18.3)
Western European and others	6 (33.3)	20 (15.3)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.7)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances		
Last election of members held on 28 May 2013		
Total number of membership and ratifications	10	38
Africa	2 (20.0)	9 (23.7)
Asia	2 (20.0)	4 (10.5)
Eastern Europe	1 (10.0)	5 (13.2)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	2 (20.0)	14 (36.8)
Western European and others	3 (30.0)	6 (15.8)

[a] Members who were newly elected in June 2013 will start to serve as a member of the Committee from January 2014; accordingly, a change in the membership through the last election is not reflected in the present report.
[b] Next election of members to be held on 1 October 2013.
[c] Next election of members to be held on 5 December 2013.

B. The current status of gender-balance in membership of treaty bodies

22. Female treaty body members constitute 40 per cent of the total membership of the treaty bodies, with 69 members out of 172. With the exception of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the statistics illustrate that the membership of treaty bodies is still male-dominated (see table 4). It is also noteworthy that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has only 1 male member out of 23 members and more efforts should be made to improve a gender balance in the Committee.

Table 4
Gender composition of treaty bodies

Committee	*Total*	*Female*	*Male*
		(percentage)	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)
Human Rights Committee	18	5 (27.8)	13 (72.2)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18	4 (22.2)	14 (77.8)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23	22 (95.7)	1 (4.3)
Committee against Torture	10	4 (40.0)	6 (60.0)
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18	11 (61.1)	7 (38.9)
Committee on Migrant Workers	14	4 (28.6)	10 (71.4)
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture	25	8 (32.0)	17 (68.0)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18	7 (38.9)	11 (61.1)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10	1 (10.0)	9 (90.0)
Total	**172**	**69 (40.1)**	**103 (59.9)**

VI. Conclusion

23. **Under the terms of the nine human rights treaties and an optional protocol that establish a treaty body, the modalities for the nomination and election of treaty body members is a matter for States parties. Where the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is concerned, the nomination of candidates for election is a matter for States parties, whereas election is a matter for the members of the Economic and Social Council, with geographical distribution being subject to Council resolution 1985/17.**

24. **The Secretary-General reminds States parties that the equitable geographical distribution of membership is essential for the effective functioning of the treaty bodies. In that regard, he recommends that States parties step up efforts to ensure equitable geographical representation in the treaty bodies, including by setting up regional quotas for members in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the treaty in question, similar to United Nations models that allocate seats to the five regional groups. The Secretary-General recommends that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights include, in the documentation prepared for elections of treaty body members by meetings of States parties, an overview of the current situation in that treaty body in terms of geographic and gender balance.**

25. **More specifically, the Secretary-General recommends that States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which allows for the nomination of two candidates by the State party, take into consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the treaty bodies when nominating a candidate who is a national of another State party.**

26. **The Secretary-General also recommends that States parties ensure the equal representation of women and men in the human rights treaty body membership through their considerate nomination of candidates and voting.**

27. **The Secretary-General further recommends that the present report be forwarded to the chairs of the meetings or conferences of States parties, as well as to the Economic and Social Council, for the consideration by those forums at their next meetings.**

Annex

Regional groups

The statistics contained in the present report were calculated on the basis of the following regional groups. Membership of the regional groups is not fixed and this list does not constitute official recognition of their composition.

African States (54 States)

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Asian States (52 States)

Afghanistan	Myanmar
Bahrain	Nauru
Bangladesh	Nepal
Bhutan	Oman
Brunei Darussalam	Pakistan
Cambodia	Papua New Guinea
China	Philippines
Cyprus	Qatar
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea
Fiji	Samoa
India	Saudi Arabia
Indonesia	Singapore
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Solomon Islands
Iraq	Sri Lanka
Japan	Syrian Arab Republic
Jordan	Tajikistan
Kazakhstan	Thailand
Kuwait	Timor-Leste
Kyrgyzstan	Tonga
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Turkmenistan
Lebanon	Tuvalu
Malaysia	United Arab Emirates
Maldives	Uzbekistan
Marshall Islands	Vanuatu
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Viet Nam
Mongolia	Yemen[a]

Eastern European States (23 States)

Albania
Armenia***
Azerbaijan***
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina****
Bulgaria
Croatia****
Czech Republic*
Estonia***
Georgia***
Hungary
Latvia***
Lithuania***
Montenegro
Poland
Republic of Moldova***
Romania
Russian Federation***
Serbia and Montenegro****
Slovakia*
Slovenia****
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia****
Ukraine

Latin American and Caribbean States (33 States)

Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Western European and other States (29 States)

Andorra
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany**
Greece
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Malta
Monaco
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Portugal
San Marino
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America

Not members of a regional group

Kiribati
Palau

Note: Both Palau and Kiribati are included in the Asian Group for the purposes of the present report, notwithstanding that they do not formally adhere to this group.

Total: 191 Member States

States parties that are not members of the United Nations

Cook Islands[b]
Holy See[c]
Niue[b]

Defunct former States parties

Czechoslovakia*

German Democratic Republic**

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics***

Yugoslavia****

Notes

* Czechoslovakia ceased to exist on 1 January 1993, on which date the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as successor States to the former Czechoslovakia, considered themselves bound by the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General to which Czechoslovakia was party. Both States are within the Eastern European Group.

** The German Democratic Republic acceded to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 October 1990, resulting in one less State within the Eastern European Group.

*** The Russian Federation, as of 24 December 1991, maintained full responsibility for the rights and obligations of the USSR under the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General. The territory which formerly constituted the USSR, entirely within the Eastern European Group, is now represented by the Russian Federation and 12 other independent States, seven within the Eastern group (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova) and five within the Asian group (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Belarus (as the Byelorussian SSR) and Ukraine (as the Ukrainian SSR) were each founding members of the United Nations in their own right.

**** The following States succeeded to the treaty rights and obligations with effect from the dates indicated previously undertaken by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 March 1992), Croatia (8 October 1991), Serbia and Montenegro (27 April 1992), Slovenia (25 June 1991) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (17 September 1991). The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist upon the independence of these five successor States.

[a] On 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen merged to form the Republic of Yemen. Between 6 April 1989 and 22 May 1990, both States were parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, resulting in an increase in the number of States parties in the Asian group.

[b] Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing territories in free association with New Zealand. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was applied by New Zealand to the Cook Islands and Niue at the time of its ratification of the Convention on 10 January 1985. The Secretary-General, as depositary of multilateral treaties, recognized the full treaty-making capacity of the Cook Islands in 1992 and of Niue in 1994. Both States are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Currently, the Cook Islands and Niue are not parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in their own right. For the purpose of this study, both States are included with the other Pacific States in the Asian group, notwithstanding that New Zealand is part of the Western group.

[c] The Holy See has observer status at the United Nations and is a party to three human rights conventions: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention against Torture and Convention on the Rights of the Child. It does not adhere to a regional group.

United Nations A/68/324

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2013

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Sixty-eighth session
Item 88 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General**

1. The fifty-seventh report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for the calendar year 2012 (GC(57)/3), is submitted herewith to the General Assembly. Major developments since the report was published will be covered by the annual statement of the Director General of the Agency to the General Assembly. The report has been transmitted in accordance with the provisions of article III, paragraph 1 (a), of the Agreement governing the relationship between the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (General Assembly resolution 1145 (XII), annex).

2. As only a limited number of copies of the report are available, it has not been possible to make a full distribution. Delegations are therefore requested to have the copies transmitted to them available during the discussion of this item.

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* A/68/150.

** The annual reports, in all languages, are printed in Vienna in August of each year as part of the documentation for the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A specified number of copies are sent to the United Nations as part of the documentation for the General Assembly.

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United Nations A/68/325

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2013

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Sixty-eighth session
Item 19 (h) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development

Harmony with Nature

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/214. In that resolution, the Assembly also requested that the President of the Assembly convene, at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, a third interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2013, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the resolution, to be included also as an input for the discussion of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development.

* A/68/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/214, entitled "Harmony with Nature", requested the President of the Assembly to convene, at its sixty-seventh session, an interactive dialogue on the subject, to be held at the plenary meetings of the Assembly to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2013, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, and to submit to the Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, a report on the implementation of that resolution, to be included also as an input for the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda.

2. The purpose of the interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature was to examine different economic approaches, in the context of sustainable development, in order to further a more ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), which calls for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development, Member States and other stakeholders acknowledged that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of societies and noted that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development.

3. With regard to the ongoing discussion of sustainable development, neoclassical economics has a tendency to assume that human well-being increases with the accumulation of goods and services, while ecological economics, which recognizes that our well-being depends to a large extent on economic development, stresses the negative impact of our unbalanced relationship with nature. Ecological economics thus paves the way for the recognition that sustainability is a multifaceted goal that includes economic, social and environmental dimensions. It points to the need to ensure the resilience of ecological and socioeconomic systems by conserving and investing in them.

4. In the field of ecological economics, the use of natural resources is measured in terms of collective well-being. Ecological economics attaches great value to healthy societies, integrated with a thriving natural world, including for intergenerational equality. A number of Member States have already adopted this perspective and have recognized the rights of nature in their laws as being vital to the promotion of sustainable development.

5. It is universally recognized that in order to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations it is necessary to foster a universal respect for the Earth system and its species, and to accept our responsibility to restore the health and integrity of the planet's ecosystems.

6. As recognized at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to determining our collective well-being and development. In the years to come, ecological economics needs to inform our thinking on economic policies, in a way that ensures collective well-being.

7. In his statement delivered at the interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature, the Secretary-General stressed that climate change is a real and growing problem and that the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, often driven by greed, was eroding the planet's fragile ecosystems: biodiversity is increasingly being lost; more

and more species are disappearing; short-sighted commercial practices are depleting fish stocks; and acidity in the oceans is threatening the whole marine food chain.

8. If development is to be truly sustainable, and if humankind is to coexist in a more holistic relationship with the Earth, it is vital that natural systems are taken into account and natural resources managed in a sustainable way. This has been recognized at all major summits and conferences dealing with this issue from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

9. Simultaneously, we must continue to seek economic efficiency and good economic decision-making, which is not possible if all costs and benefits are not considered. These externalities, including the depletion of natural resources and the impact of pollution and climate change and the loss of biodiversity on human well-being are not defined as costs. They are not, therefore, included in the price of products. Capturing this cost in the marketplace would provide a powerful incentive in the move towards sustainability, and would also make good economic sense. If this is to happen, the international community needs to discuss these issues and embrace sustainability as a guiding principle in development.

10. The following chapter will address the degree to which nature has been marginalized in the international discourse on the environment and how economic development and the field of economics have continued without due regard for nature, making the achievement of a holistic form of sustainable development more difficult.

II. The social construction of nature

11. Concepts of nature range from the basic elements of the natural world, trees, rivers and animal life, to how our world came into existence, to the world that exists without human beings or human civilizations, to the universe beyond our home planet, in all its staggering complexity. Nature refers to life in general and its presence is found everywhere — in the metaphysical, subatomic and cosmic realms. As a concept, it has existed since the beginnings of human history.[1]

12. To most observers, nature is difficult to conceive in a simple, objectifiable way. Given all the interconnections between what is perceptible to our senses and what is only conceivable to the mind, regaining and maintaining harmony with nature will require knowledge not only from scientists, but also from philosophers, poets and others whose studies, imaginations, intuitions, spiritual revelations and inspirations offer insights into the intrinsic value of nature.

13. In his final book, the late philosopher Ronald Dworkin explained that what we call nature, the universe as a whole and all its parts, is something of intrinsic value and wonder. Nature is the locus and nutrient of our physical lives, providing transcendental value in what may seem otherwise transient and dead.[2]

[1] Barbara Baudot, "Nature: The Lost Sheep in the World Debate on the Environment", delivered at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, Saint Anselm College (April 2013) and at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (September 2012) (unpublished).

[2] Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

14. Because its physical and metaphysical dimensions are so closely intertwined, it is difficult to provide a concrete definition of nature. Scientists, philosophers and poets have evoked a sense of nature, yet it continues to be shrouded in mystery and enchantment. It is up to the international community, with its growing knowledge and understanding, soul and reason, to seek ways of healing the planet.

15. Hope remains that the damage done to the Earth can be reversed, and that hope has found a home in the science of ecology, which includes both the non-living world and the world of humans. Any ontological difference between what was once called the mineral kingdom, the plant and animal kingdoms and the kingdom of man has vanished: the scope of the idea of ecology is universal.

16. In the early 1970s, after three decades of teaching philosophy at the University of Oslo, Arne Naess, one of the founding fathers of environmental philosophy, and the man who coined the term "deep ecology", published a short paper called "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement", in which he stated that there are two ecology movements. One is chiefly concerned with pollution, the depletion of natural resources and the usefulness of the Earth for humans (anthropocentrism). The second is concerned with the richness, diversity and intrinsic value of all the natural world — this is deep ecology.

17. Deep ecology is rooted in the basic concept that every living thing, animal and plant, has an equal right to live and flourish. Mr. Naess, in one of his last essays, published before his death in 2009 at the age of 96, stated:

> "We are living on an incredibly beautiful little planet, but our human existence is threatened. If we are to survive we have to learn to think differently. The thinking for the future has to be loyal to nature. It must encompass all humans and all living creatures, because everything alive, in itself, has a value."

III. The emergence of the environment as a human construct

18. The environment is a relatively recent concept, dating to the early years of the nineteenth century with the growth of industrialization and the modernization of the world economy. In this view, nature and the resources it provides, are seen in a utilitarian fashion, as raw materials for our use. "The environment" as a concept has greater political implications than "nature", and our consideration of nature, in the shadow of that concept, has been set aside, and nature taken for granted.

19. Yet it is precisely the values associated with the preservation of nature that have inspired recognition that the commercial exploitation of the natural world is harmful. Nature can inspire an appreciation of the value of happiness and satisfaction of the human spirit. Moreover, in accepting nature as the source of life, as life itself, we might be brought to realize that it cannot be protected in a piecemeal fashion.

20. In the nineteenth century, numerous thinkers and political figures, East and West, documented their appreciation of the intrinsic value of nature. Their work was addressed in detail in the three previous reports of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/65/314, A/66/302 and A/67/317). At the dawn of the industrial revolution, they warned that the rapid changes in agricultural and industrial technology posed serious threats not only to the quality of life on the planet but to civilization itself.

21. Max Weber, the German sociologist, foresaw that a general disenchantment would emerge in the modern industrial era, particularly in Western civilization. In the words of Richard Jenkins, disenchantment means that "humankind believes that it can, in principle, master all things by calculation".[3] Disenchantment is the result of the evolution of science and technology, by which nature has been reduced to a tool for human improvement and material development.

22. Compounding this widespread disenchantment is the recognition that some segments of the population, notably city dwellers, suffer from "nature deficit disorder". Lacking exposure to and experience with nature, many city dwellers, given their surroundings, have grown up without sufficient contact with the grandeur of the natural world or knowledge of its multilayered complexity and wonder — a situation that raises serious concerns for the future.

23. Richard Louv, the journalist and founder of the Children and Nature Network, who coined the concept of "nature deficit disorder", believes that many children are prone to such a disorder, which is likely to pose a bigger problem in the future:

> "An increasing pace in the last three decades, approximately, of a rapid disengagement between children and direct experiences in nature ... has profound implications, not only for the health of future generations but for the health of the Earth itself".[4]

24. Symptoms of this disorder are to be found not only in developed but also in developing countries. Surely, many of the strongest environmental advocates are those who have had a great deal of exposure to the wonders of the natural environment in childhood.

25. In response to the excesses of contemporary society, as reflected in our unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, initiatives are in place to promote sustainable living by organizing human life to promote ecological resilience. The idea of "transition towns", forwarded by Louise Rooney and Catherine Dunne, is a response to the relentless exploitation of natural resources, an alternative offering smaller, local-scale communities that are less reliant on long supply chains and fossil fuels. The ideas behind transition town initiatives vary, but in general they are intended to counteract the idea that growth should not continue to be the sole goal of economic choices and to support local and community-shared production and clean energy efforts that strengthen community relationships and stimulate well-being, social justice and resilience. Such initiatives clearly reveal a growing realization that economic policies must be inclusive and must respect the environment.

26. As of May 2013, more than 1,100 transition town initiatives were identified in 43 different countries.[5] Some initiatives, such as the Kinsale energy descent action plan 2021, written by the students of Kinsale College of Further Education, establish practical and detailed steps towards a more sustainable livelihood, notably in relation to energy and fossil fuels reduction, food and education.

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[3] Richard Jenkins, "Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium", *Mind and Matter*, vol. 10, No. 2, 2012.

[4] See Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Algonquin Books, 2005.

[5] See http://www.transitionnetwork.org.

27. From the above, it is clear that it is possible to find practical solutions to our current issues and to shift from a consumer society to a broader, community-oriented sustainable lifestyle, in harmony with nature.

IV. Environment on the international agenda

28. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in June 1972, established the environment on the international agenda. The Conference was first proposed by Sweden at a time of heightened concern about acid rain, pollution in the Baltic Sea and the rising levels of pesticides and heavy metals in fish and birds, at a time when it was realized that industrial wastes have cross-border implications. Countries discovered that their environments were not self-contained units but were affected by the actions taken by others throughout the world.

29. The different aspects of the environment that are being addressed in international negotiations are physical, social and political, and they thus lend themselves to empirical assessment and measurable progress. The following three different worldviews regarding the use of the term "the environment" further explain this political reality.

Environment: our surroundings

30. The use of the term the environment referring to objects or regions was not common before the nineteenth century, and then only when it was used to convey an aesthetic appreciation of one's surroundings. It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that the term evoked concern about the exhaustion of resources and contamination. Politically, this concept is now manifested in environmentalism, defined in the Oxford Dictionary of Environment and Conservation as "concern with the preservation of the environment, especially from the effects of pollution; the politics and policies associated with this". Thus, scientifically stated, the environment refers to the physical, chemical and biotic conditions surrounding a living organism.

Environment: the aggregate of the social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community (translated in this context to mean a sustainable development approach to peace, justice and the environment)

31. This approach, while not explicitly within the realm of modern environmental politics, was in use in the nineteenth century. It draws a distinction between the discourse focused on changes in natural resources and the biosphere in industrialized countries and the discourse introduced as part of the North-South dialogue. It was enshrined in principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration adopted in 1972 at the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment:

> "Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations."

32. Subsequently, socioeconomic development was inextricably linked to debates on international environmental policies. It is embodied in the idea of sustainable

development, which connects protection of the environment with socioeconomic progress in a strategy for change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change all work together to enhance society's current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.

Environment: physical, chemical, and biotic factors that impact an organism or an ecological community ultimately determine its form and function

33. The third perspective builds on an ecological vision of the environment. This understanding derives from notions of ecology, emerging only in the late nineteenth century. The definition of ecology in the Oxford Dictionary of Environment and Conservation, which defines ecology as the science of the economy of animals and plants, that branch of biology which deals with the relations of living organisms to their surroundings, their habitats and modes of life, captures this view. This vision sees earth's inhabitants and the environment in a symbiotic relationship that must be preserved.

34. Thus a new category of problems, the "global issues", emerged. The Stockholm Conference was the prelude to a series of significant United Nations meetings through the 1970s which recognized that national concerns and situations are interrelated, and that this interrelated world operates under a number of common constraints.

35. It was only in the course of the 1970s, with the additional impact of the oil crisis, that Governments started to recognize that continued growth depended not only on capital formation or skilled manpower but also on the long-term availability of a viable natural world (or natural resources). In introducing the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future", to the General Assembly in 1987, Gro Harlem Bruntland described the environment as the place where we all live; and development as what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode.[6] Her characterization of the environment combined economics and ecology.

36. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, served to develop a programmatic approach to environmentally sound and sustainable development through the adoption of Agenda 21. The principles behind Agenda 21 are set out in the Earth Charter, which "seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations".[7] Nevertheless, in the outcome documents of the Conference, humans remained at the centre of the idea of the environment.

37. The next important international conference that addressed the environment was the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, at which Member States reaffirmed that the survival of humankind is dependent on a healthy environment.

38. Ten years later, in 2012, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development served as another reaffirmation of this

[6] See A/42/427, annex.

[7] See http://www.earthcharterinaction.org.

approach to sustainable development, recognizing that it must build on economic, social and environmental considerations and priorities. The document reinforced a human-centred view of the environment.

V. Development through environmental transformation

39. Through the development process, the potentialities of an object or organism are advanced and improved upon. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Justus Moser, the conservative founder of social history, used the German word *Entwicklung* to describe the gradual process of social change.

40. In the 1800s, *Entwicklung* began to be used as a reflexive verb. Self-development became fashionable, and development became central to the work of Karl Marx, which he described as a historical process that unfolded in the same way as natural laws. To some extent, both the Hegelian concept of history and Darwin's concept of evolution have been interwoven into our concept of development.

41. Development became a powerful force, employed by politicians to catalyse the industrial mode of production. Development came to define a linear approach to social evolution.

42. English publications in the latter part of the nineteenth century framed development in the context of evolution, and a number of authors introduced evolution in the titles of their books, notwithstanding the fact that they continued to use development in their texts as the principal operative term.

43. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a new use of the term became widespread. "Urban development" has stood, since then, for a specific manner of reshaping urban surroundings based on the massive, homogenous industrial production of urban spaces.

44. Throughout the century, the meanings associated with urban development and colonial development transformed the meaning of development, and it is now a word whose significance depends on the specific context in which it is employed.

45. Development cannot delink itself from the words with which it was formed — growth, evolution, maturation. Similarly, those who now use the word cannot free themselves from a web of meanings that impart a certain blindness to their language, thought and action. The word indicates that a society or an individual is doing well because there is evidence of progress in line with a necessary, inevitable, universal law towards a desirable goal. Development retains, to this day, the meaning coined a century ago by Ernst Haeckel: "Development is, from this moment on, the magic word with which we will solve all the mysteries that surround us or, at least, that which will guide us towards their solution".[8]

46. For two thirds of the Earth's population, this positive meaning of the word development, profoundly rooted after two centuries of its social construction, is a reminder of the current undesirable and undignified condition of many societies. In trying to escape this condition, there has been a tendency for societies to strive to become part of the mass production and consumption system.

[8] Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Zed Press, 2012.

VI. Economic growth as the current paradigm of development

47. The word economy can be traced back to the Greek word *oikonomos*, "one who manages a household", derived from *oikos*, "house", and *nemein*, "to manage". From *oikonomos* was derived *oikonomi*, which had not only the sense of "management of a household or family" but also includes concepts of "thrift", "direction", "administration", "arrangement", and "public revenue of a state". The first recorded use of the word economy, found in a work possibly composed in 1440, describes "the management of economic affairs", in this case, of a monastery. Today, the use of economy most frequently refers to the neoclassical economic system of a country or an area, an idea which was not developed until the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

48. Over the centuries, the meaning of development was increasingly reduced to economic growth. The idea that development consisted of growth in the income per person in economically underdeveloped areas was first proposed by W. Arthur Lewis in 1944 and incorporated into the Charter of the United Nations in 1947.

49. Lewis' 1955 dictum that "our subject matter is growth, and not distribution" reflects the mainstream emphasis on economic growth that permeated the whole field of development thinking. In 1957, Paul Baran, an influential development economist, wrote on the political economy of growth and defined growth or development as the increase in the per capita production of material goods.

50. The First United Nations Development Decade of the 1960s considered the social and economic aspects of development separately, but there was a change with the Second United Nations Development Decade of the 1970s, which called for a unified approach to development and planning, which would fully integrate the economic and social components in the formulation of policies and programmes.

51. The above notwithstanding, the 1970s saw a slow evolution in the opposite direction: dispersion. Major issues, such as the environment, population, hunger, women and employment, were successively brought to the forefront. Every issue was pursued along an independent path, concentrating both public and institutional attention.

52. The question of a unifying principle continued on a different front. In 1974, the Cocoyoc Declaration emphasized that the purpose of development should not be to develop things, but to develop man. According to the declaration, any process of growth that did not lead to the fulfilment of the basic needs of food, shelter, education, employment or health care — or even worse, disrupts them — was a travesty of the idea of development.[9] Some of these ideas were expanded in the proposals of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, which suggested in 1975, another manner of development, human-centred development.

53. The next decade, the 1980s, was called "the lost decade for development". For many countries the "adjustment process" meant abandoning or dismantling previous achievements in the name of development, understood in a narrow fashion. By 1985, a post-development age seemed to be in the offing.[8] Today, 28 years later, we are again calling for a new development agenda, the post-2015 development agenda.

[9] See the Cocoyoc Declaration, adopted at the United Nations Environment Programme/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Symposium on Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies, 8 to 12 October 1974, UNEP Series A/C.2/292.

54. The 1990s, by contrast, gave birth to a new development ethos that followed two clearly distinguishable lines. In the North, it called for redevelopment, that is, the development of what had been poorly developed or was now obsolete. In the North, public attention was captivated by the speed and the conditions under which what had been developed could be destroyed, dismantled or substituted (for example, nuclear plants and poisonous pesticides). In the South, redevelopment also required the dismantling of what was left by the so-called adjustment process.

55. Conceptually and politically, redevelopment took the shape of sustainable development, as defined and described in the above-mentioned report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future". But in its mainstream interpretation, sustainable development has often been conceived as a strategy for sustaining economic growth, not for supporting the flourishing and the maintenance of an infinitely diverse natural and social life. Sustainable development, as originally conceived, did consider the concepts of holism, resilience and equity, but there has been a failure to operationalize a version of sustainable development that embraces those fundamental concepts. Primarily, this is because we have retained models for economic growth that ignore these principles and that discount the future cost of goods and services based on their utility in today's market. This ignores the incalculable value that nature offers us, both today and for future generations.

56. The founding fathers of economics saw in scarcity, which connotes shortage, want, insufficiency and frugality, the keystone for their theoretical constructs of economics.

57. The "law of scarcity" was construed by economists to denote the technical assumption that man's wants are great, not to say infinite, whereas his means are limited, though improvable. The assumption implies choices over the allocation of means (resources). This fact defines an economic problem whose solution is proposed by economists through the market.[8]

58. Another key deficiency of the current market system, as explained by Ian Mason, the Principal of the School of Economic Science in London, is that key factors of production such as land are considered to be irrelevant. This is simply not the case, as material wealth, the things we use to satisfy material desires as well as to feed, clothe and shelter ourselves, has only one common source: it is all produced by human effort applied to land. Every single atom of material used for human production and consumption has its origins in the Earth. This was well-known in ancient times, and in the same way it is still understood by many indigenous cultures today.[10]

59. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the food production sector. According to the ETC Group (also known as the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration), for the past half-century we have bought into the assumption that the prevailing western model of food production and consumption, that is, the industrial food chain, is inevitable and the answer to food security. This has fuelled increases in meat and dairy consumption, obesity and the need for fertilizers and pesticides that harm humans and nature. Most people do not realize that only 30 per cent of all food consumed is produced through the industrial food chain, whereas the

[10] Ian Mason, "One World, One Wealth: Economics, Justice and Rights for Nature", third interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature, 22 April 2013 (www.harmonywithnatureun.org).

remaining 70 per cent is produced by small farmers.[11] This should prompt reflection on how best to achieve food security.

VII. Constructing a new paradigm: harmony with nature

60. An important aspect in the construction of a new paradigm is the redefinition of humankind's needs and the recognition of the need to move beyond the unsustainable pursuit of ever-increasing economic growth without concern for social development and nature. Harmony with nature implies that people do not assume that they have unlimited resources or means. Rather, we must accept that there are certain limits to growth on a finite planet. This fact was first pointed out by Donella Meadows and others in 1972 and it is being echoed by ecological economists today.

61. Harmony with nature also calls for a rehabilitation of the human spirit, the concept of holism, and for its relevance as a factor in the pursuit of a lifestyle that respects the rights of nature. Human lifestyles must be respectful of ecological limits, and the limits of nature. This means adopting a new paradigm that includes harmonious relationships with nature.

62. The advancement of fuel-efficient machines, environmental risk assessment analyses, the close review of natural processes and other practical actions for greater sustainability are needed to help protect nature. Although these initiatives are important, it must nevertheless be recognized that societies have inherent tendencies to exploit nature, and that the exploitation is aimed solely at the goal of enhancing growth without due regard for the effects of such growth on the well-being of present or future generations. Calls for securing the survival of the planet often, upon closer inspection, are intended, rather, to ensure the survival of the marketplace.

63. Our practical actions for enhancing sustainability should be embodied within the framework of a new economics, addressing market failures that have ignored ecological implications and resulted in the increasing deterioration of nature as well as of the well-being of many human populations around the world.

64. A paradigm for a new economics must go beyond neoclassical and environmental economics and learn instead from the concepts of deep ecology, the rights of nature and systems theory.[12] Serving nature and recognizing its inherent significance should be part of the foundation of a new economic model that ought to factor into the complex dynamic interplay between all key drivers of sustainability, including justice, equity and rights for all the citizens of the world, and for the natural world from which they derive their existence.

65. As noted by Ian Mason in his presentation to the third interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature,[10] economics, as currently understood, produces many injustices, including great accumulations of wealth alongside widespread poverty and a natural environment that is systematically being destroyed to maintain profit margins. This calls for a thorough revision of the contemporary understanding of

[11] ETC Group, "Who Will Feed Us?: Questions for the Food and Climate Crises", communiqué No. 102, November 2009 (www.etcgroup.org).

[12] See Arne Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*, Counterpoint Press, 2008; Robert Frazier Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1989; and Donella H. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems*, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008.

economics, and recognition of the fact that assuming infinite economic growth is not possible in a finite world. There is need to reorient our economic system to serve people and the planet better, as recommended by ecological economists. Mr. Mason also recommended the adoption of a duty of care for nature and each other as central to ethical economics, and the implementation of that tenet through recognizing and enforcing rights for nature, just as we enforce human rights.[10]

66. It has been proven that the damage to the intrinsic regenerative capacity of nature is impaired not only directly by overexploitation of a particular element of the natural world but also, indirectly, by damage caused to other related natural elements through ecological processes. For example, hydraulic fracturing, commonly referred to as fracking, is the process of drilling and injecting fluid into the ground at a high pressure in order to fracture shale rocks to release the natural gas inside. Each gas well requires an average of 400 tanker trucks to carry water and supplies to and from each well. It takes 1 to 8 million gallons of water to complete each fracturing job. The water brought in is mixed with sand and chemicals to create fracking fluid. In the course of each job, approximately 40,000 gallons of chemicals are used. Up to 600 chemicals are used in fracking fluid, including known carcinogens and toxins, including lead, uranium and mercury. Despite engineering safeguards, groundwater pollution has already been documented as a result of fracking activities, threatening dwindling fresh water supplies.

67. In recent years, and in the light of such pervasive activities, the public has been increasingly conscious of the manner in which nature continues to be treated, and violated, despite dire warnings by the scientific and medical communities regarding the health of both the planet and its inhabitants. Many people now acknowledge that nature has its own right to exist and thrive, just as humans do. People have begun to realize that the limits of nature are inviolable, and that human action needs to be restrained accordingly. This relationship is based both on science and ethics.

68. The Secretary-General, in his presentation to the third interactive dialogue, stated:

> "When we threaten the planet, we undermine our only home — and our future survival. Fortunately, millions of people around the world recognize this problem. They are part of a growing movement for sustainable development. More and more Governments are hearing their calls for action. Bolivia [Plurinational State of] has adopted a legal framework that specifically protects Mother Earth. Ecuador's Constitution recognizes the rights of nature. Many other communities around the world are translating their respect for the environment into measures that protect it."[13]

69. Speaking at the third interactive dialogue, Linda Sheehan, the Executive Director of the Earth Law Center in California, stated that:

> "the ethical qualities that create happy, prosperous homes — love, cooperation, friendship, duty — both arise from and create strong relationships. We have discarded these ethics, however, in favour of an economic system premised on separation and greed ... An essential element of this shift in perspective is

[13] See third interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature, 22 April 2013, available at: http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org.

realizing that relationships can flourish only if we recognize the inherent rights of their participants. Over time, we have learned that the denial of rights creates separation. As we came over time to acknowledge the rights of people who were formerly treated as property, we began to have full, thriving relationships with them. These lessons extend to the natural world. We are first and foremost Earth citizens and must recognize the rights of ecosystems and species to exist and thrive, if we are to flourish ourselves".[13]

70. Ms. Sheehan further recalled that when the United Nations was drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the drafting committee had observed that the supreme value of the human person did not originate in the decision of a worldly power, but rather in the fact of existing. So too must we recognize the supreme value and rights of the natural world as arising from the fact of existing.[13]

71. In other parts of the world, subnational and municipal laws have been passed that recognize the rights of local natural systems to exist, thrive and evolve. Significantly, these laws reject the rights of corporations that would conduct unwanted harmful activities over the rights of local community members to live in harmony with each other and their environment. As noted by the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, such laws support a community's rights to nurture its home rather than witness its destruction.[14] In one example, in 2012, New Zealand recognized the rights of the Whanganui River and its tributaries.[13]

72. In order for a new economic system to be sustainable, it is essential that it truly sustain nature. Sustainability in this context involves the recognition of the limits of nature and the rights of nature, as well as the need for humankind to adhere to these beliefs. A new economic system can no longer treat nature simply as the source of raw materials for industrial production for the ongoing flow of ever more commodities and the indefinite accumulation of capital.[13] Limits are not unidirectional. They work reciprocally between nature and society. Recognition of the limits of nature implies limits on society; the notion that no limits on society are necessary imply a breakdown in our respect for the limits of nature.[15]

73. At the third interactive dialogue, Fander Falconí, the National Secretary of Development Planning of Ecuador, advanced the idea that recognizing nature in our economic and social processes would translate into two fundamental aspects. The first would be to acknowledge the effects that thermodynamics have in human economic activity, effects that have been thoroughly studied by ecological economists. Scholars in this field believe that it is necessary to place biophysical limits on the irrational aspects of economic growth, aspects that are unsustainable from the perspective of science, and instead to visualize an economic system that operates in line with the workings of thermodynamics. Essential to this approach is the establishment of limits to human economic growth and acknowledgement of the rights and the limits of nature.[13]

74 The second aspect is to take into account social and individual behavioural patterns, particularly those found in the South, given specific aspects of wealth distribution, points of social fragility and cultural heritage. In this context, Mr. Falconí noted that the Constitution of Ecuador is the first in the world to grant

[14] See http://www.celdf.org.

[15] Vandana Shiva, "Resources", in Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Zed Press, 2012.

rights to nature and to implement them through a national plan for well-being, which contains a set of indicators, including an ecological footprint, to monitor national consumption levels.[13]

75. Also speaking at the third interactive dialogue, Jon Rosales, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Saint Lawrence University in New York, explained that the proper relationship between the economy and nature is one in which nature is the parent and the economy a subsystem of it. Science has already identified nature's limits, and has shown that economic activity must remain safe within those limits. The foundation of this relationship is best reflected in subsistence indigenous cultures that live in true harmony with nature, respecting ecological thresholds and living under a "home economics" system embedded in the land. Sharing is particularly important to many subsistence cultures, which is the reason why such cultures are often called "moral economies". Indigenous cultures long ago acknowledged the rights of Mother Nature, her nurturing abundance, her structural integrity and her limits.[13]

76. On the occasion of the 128th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Quito, Members of Parliament came together for a discussion on the theme "From unrelenting growth to purposeful development, 'Buen Vivir': New approaches, new solutions". The Quito communiqué adopted by the Assembly on 27 March 2013, stated that:

> "In a finite world, the perennial cycle of increasing consumption and production that is at the heart of the current economic model is no longer sustainable. Growth alone is not the answer to the social, economic and environmental challenges of our time; in fact is becoming part of the problem. A different approach that focuses on well-being in all its dimensions is required if we are to evolve as a global community able to fulfil core human values of peace, solidarity and harmony with nature."[16]

77. Lin Harmon, the Dean of Environmental Law at Pace University School of Law in New York, recalled that the 1982 World Charter for Nature (General Assembly resolution 37/7, annex), in its general principles, stated that "Nature shall be respected and its essential processes shall not be impaired" and that "the principles set forth in the Charter shall be reflected in the law and practice of each State, as well as at the international level". Ms. Harmon noted that it was clear that the world community was still not abiding by the non-impairment principle. Laws and the current level of law enforcement were not sufficient to keep global temperatures from climbing and to prevent the collapse of ecosystems and species.

78. Environmental lawyers and scholars realize that, along with the human right to a healthy environment, the rights of nature must be examined and implemented more broadly to ensure our collective well-being — a step that some countries have already taken by starting to nurture nature as it nurtures us.

79. In February 2013, the documentary "Earth from Space", produced in extensive consultation with scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America (NASA), showcased information conveyed by the 120 earth-observing satellites staring down at us from space. The data taken from these satellites and transformed into visual sequences reveal the intricate and

[16] See http://www.ipu.org.

surprising web of forces that sustain life on Earth. From the microscopic world of water molecules vaporizing over the oceans to the magnetic field that is bigger than Earth itself, the data reveal the astonishing beauty and complexity of our changing planet.

80. In the narrative to the film, Pier Sellers of the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center states that the world can be seen as one huge system, all linked through the atmosphere and the oceans, rolling its way around the sun. The satellite data shows that we live in one interconnected system, and that different processes are happening in different parts of the world, monsoons in some parts of the world, desert storms in others.

81. Our success as a species has resulted in rapid population growth, and today our presence can be seen across 80 per cent of the world's landmass. As a species, we are affecting the different natural cycles that govern our planet. Many factors play a part in the dramatic changes that are taking place in the natural world around us, most notably in climate patterns, but most scientists agree that human activity is the main driving force.

VIII. Conclusion

82. Today, we find ourselves at another critical juncture trying to define a post-2015 development agenda. It will be critical that the agenda is aimed at sustaining nature rather than reducing it to a resource to feed our economic system. The word "resource" originally implied life. Its root is the Latin verb *surgere*, which evoked the image of a spring that continually rises from the ground. The concept thus highlighted nature's power of self-regeneration and called attention to its prodigious creativity. Moreover, it implied a traditional idea about the relationship between humans and nature: that since nature bestows her gifts on humans, they, in turn, must show their respect and strive not to do any harm to nature as the source of that generosity. In earlier times, "resource" therefore suggested reciprocity as well as regeneration.[15]

83. With the advent of industrialism and colonialism, however, a conceptual break occurred, and "natural resources" became those parts of nature that were required as inputs for industrial production and trade. With the capacity of regeneration gone, the attitude of reciprocity has also lost ground: we presume, falsely, that it is now simply human inventiveness and industry that impart value to nature.

84. In the discussions leading up to the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, nature must be placed at the core of sustainable development. We must recover the ancient wisdom that gently cautioned that economic wealth is ontologically not convertible into life, a truth captured graphically in the oft-quoted Native American saying:

> "Only when the last tree is cut, the last fish is caught and the last river polluted; when to breathe the air is sickening, you will realize that you can't eat money".

IX. Recommendations

85. **Drawing on the foregoing analysis, the presentations made at the three interactive dialogues on Harmony with Nature and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled, "The future we want", Member States are encouraged, at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, to take into account the following recommendations:**

(a) **Further build up a knowledge network of well-respected practitioners, thinkers and academicians, who work in the cutting edge of their fields of natural and social sciences, including physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, economics, sociology, law, ethics, anthropology, medicine and linguistics, to advance the holistic conceptualization of a new economic paradigm that reflects the principles, drivers and values of living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information, particularly from centres of excellence on space science, which portray findings in a visual format;**

(b) **Encourage universities and research establishments to further advance a contemporary understanding of economics, taking into account the well-being of all of humanity and of nature, in accordance with both science and ethics;**

(c) **Recognize and guide care for nature and the fundamental interconnections between humanity and nature, including, as appropriate to national circumstances, through the introduction of enforceable statutes and constitutional provisions in keeping with the Rio principles and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;**

(d) **Support and promote indigenous cultures that are already living in harmony with the Earth, and learn from them, and provide support for and promote efforts being made from the national down to the local community level to reflect the protection of nature in laws and governance systems and to implement those laws for the benefit of humans and the natural world;**

(e) **Promote broader measures of economic, social and environmental progress in policymaking, encourage and engage in the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission on broader measures of progress and follow up on the results and recommendations resulting from that work;**[17]

(f) **Showcase further and support, through the United Nations Harmony with Nature website (www.harmonywithnatureun.org), the work being undertaken by Member States, major groups and other stakeholders and the growing knowledge network on the subject, in keeping with paragraph 40 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", in order to develop holistic and integrated approaches and actions that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth system;**

(g) **Include in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly a sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature" as an input for the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda.**

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[17] See E/2013/24, decision 44/114.

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Towards global partnerships

Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations has made considerable progress in achieving organizational and development goals through partnerships with the private sector. In its resolution 66/223, the General Assembly made a number of recommendations for taking advantage of the unique position of the United Nations for fostering new forms of collaboration with the private sector and for overcoming key operational challenges. Progress on implementing those recommendations has contributed to a more strategic approach to engaging with business partners and the design of more innovative, effective and impactful partnerships. At the same time, emerging trends are driving new partnership developments within the United Nations and setting the stage for progress to come. Moreover, the United Nations is becoming more adept at managing the risks of partnering with the private sector, both by improving due diligence and integrity measures and by leveraging its reputation and normative strength for aligning the business community with the values of the United Nations. In addition, the growth and evolution of the Global Compact and its Local Networks are creating new opportunities for engaging with the private sector at the country level. To ensure that the United Nations continues to build on this progress, a number of challenges must be addressed. The recommendations presented herein should be implemented to ensure more effective collaboration with the private sector, while respecting the normative standards of the United Nations and its Member States.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/223, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its sixty-eighth session on specific progress on integrity measures, on the implementation of the revised United Nations Guidelines for Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector and on the strengthening of the Global Compact Local Networks. The report builds on previous reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners (A/56/323, A/58/227, A/60/214, A/62/341, A/64/337 and A/66/320).[1]

2. The United Nations is uniquely positioned to act as a facilitator and leader in moving forward with innovative forms of collaboration with the private sector. The United Nations has been building on its foundational spirit of cooperation over the past decades by acting as a bridge-builder to various sectors and challenging them, in particular the private sector, to help to solve some of the world's most pressing problems. With renewed emphasis on partnership in the course of the discussions on a new development framework following the Millennium Development Goals, this role will become increasingly important in the years to come.

3. In this respect, the United Nations has made progress in a number of important areas. At the system level, the United Nations has garnered high-level support within the Organization and among private sector leaders for more effective collaboration; developed and shared information on partnership tools; and provided leadership in generating business commitments for helping to solve development problems. Some agencies, funds and programmes are becoming increasingly acute at tailoring private sector partnership models for achieving specific goals and scaling up successful efforts for achieving their missions. New trends, such as converging United Nations-business interests, exploring innovations in partnership models and technology, engaging with new partners in growing economies and the synchronizing of global and local goals and partnership models, are emerging and set the stage for improved means of collaborating with the private sector.

4. The United Nations is becoming more adept at leveraging its normative strength, universality and impartiality vis-à-vis the private sector and, at the same time, protecting this reputation by taking steps to improve integrity measures. Many agencies, funds and programmes have built on the revised Secretary-General's Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector by designing strategies for partnership selection and screening that match the needs and values of their organization. Many also use a shared due diligence service provider to screen potential partners. Moreover, more internal exchange is occurring on best practices regarding due diligence and new tools have been developed.

5. In addition, through the growth in the number and size of Global Compact Local Networks, now found in more than 100 countries, the 10 principles of the Global Compact and the values of the United Nations are influencing the private sector at the country level. In addition to acting as hubs for learning, dialogue and

[1] The present report draws on several sources: an online survey of 24 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; in-depth interviews with staff members throughout the United Nations system (16) and within Global Compact Local Networks (11); meetings of United Nations system private sector focal points; the annual Local Networks Forum; case studies; and a thorough review of the relevant academic literature on the subjects.

knowledge-sharing, the Local Networks are increasingly taking on other roles, including that of provoking national policy dialogue on issues such as corporate responsibility, acting as conveners for gathering input from businesses on a post-2015 development framework and facilitating new partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector.

6. Progress and encouraging trends notwithstanding, new and existing operational challenges need to be addressed. Moreover, as partnerships with the private sector become more widespread and significant, it is essential that the United Nations put in place and improve existing integrity measures at all main interfaces with the private sector to protect its brand and reputation, promote responsible business practices and United Nations values and achieve greater coherence between the agendas of the United Nations and businesses. Lastly, with their unique and growing role at the country level for fostering new relationships between the United Nations and the private sector, it is necessary to assess the progress of and challenges for Global Compact Local Networks.

II. Private sector partnership progress, trends and challenges throughout the United Nations system

A. Progress at the system level

7. The United Nations has taken important steps to more actively involve the private sector in the work of the Organization. In 2012, the Secretary-General released his five-year action plan, intent on harnessing the full power of partnership throughout all United Nations activities. This includes the need to scale up capacity to engage in transformative multi-stakeholder partnerships across a broad range of issue areas.

8. The Secretary-General has put forward a proposal to Member States to establish a new United Nations partnership facility to further support the United Nations system and Member States to leverage catalytic partnerships with the full range of partners, including civil society, businesses, financial institutions, philanthropic organizations and academic and scientific institutions. The new partnership facility's core task will be to capture the potential for partnership in delivering at scale, at the global and country levels, on the full spectrum of the United Nations mandates, goals and values. The facility will do so by providing services as requested collectively by the heads of the agencies, funds, programmes and departments of the United Nations system: ensure accountability, integrity and transparency; provide common partnership support services; create a partnership focal point network; and support and backstop multi-stakeholder initiatives.

9. Several events have helped to advance United Nations priorities among the private sector. First, a corporate sustainability forum was held on the sidelines of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, which included some 2,700 stakeholders. The event strengthened the business contribution to sustainable development through more than 200 commitments to action by companies and provided the private sector with a voice in the process for generating recommendations for a post-2015 development framework. In addition, the Secretary-General launched the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, bringing in more than 100 commitments from Governments,

businesses and investors aimed at achieving the initiative's three goals. Lastly, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat organized a partnerships forum at the event to identify and showcase dedicated partnerships implementing priority actions agreed upon in Rio de Janeiro.

10. The Global Compact Leaders Summit, to be held in September 2013 in New York, is expected to bring together more than 1,000 leaders from businesses, Governments and civil society to advance business action in support of United Nations goals. With business leaders hailing from more than 100 countries expected to attend, the Summit will unveil a global architecture for aligning business with global development priorities linked to the Millennium Development Goals and beginning a process of engaging companies and key stakeholders to 2015 and beyond. As part of the Summit, the United Nations Private Sector Forum: Africa will be organized to bring private sector and government leaders together on the unique opportunities and challenges in Africa, with a number of commitments to action expected to be made by businesses.

11. The annual meeting of United Nations system private sector focal points remains an important forum for United Nations staff working on partnerships with the private sector to exchange best practices, lessons learned and partnership innovations. In 2013, the meeting included Global Compact Local Networks in order to create synergies between United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the Networks in creating partnerships at the local level. In response to requests from United Nations staff for more frequent interactions, a United Nations private sector focal points network has been formalized. Its goals include promoting greater coherence and capacity-building within the Organization on activities involving businesses and disseminating innovations in engagement throughout the system.

12. The Global Compact has continued to develop tools for sharing private sector partnership knowledge. The quarterly UN-Business Focal Point e-newsletter provides United Nations staff with information on new partnerships and useful tools. "UN-Business Partnerships: A Handbook" was developed with input from throughout the Organization. It provides practical guidance for practitioners on designing and implementing more effective partnerships with the private sector and helps corporate representatives to better understand their partners in the United Nations. In addition, a Global Compact business partnership hub was launched. It provides an online, interactive platform to match businesses with potential partners in order to facilitate collective action on key global issues, with a focus on climate and energy, water, anti-corruption, social enterprise and United Nations-business partnerships.

13. Lastly, the Global Compact LEAD Task Force on United Nations-Business Partnerships, created in 2011, produced two new reports, respectively entitled "Catalysing transformational partnerships between the United Nations and business" and "Partnership fundamentals: A 10-step guide for creating effective UN-Business partnerships". The reports provide guidance on creating more effective partnerships and taking these collaborations to scale and driving transformative impact. The Task Force also is working on improving due diligence, partnerships life cycle management, knowledge management and capacity-building.

B. Progress and trends at the level of agencies, funds and programmes

14. Among practitioners in the United Nations, there is an optimistic view that the importance of partnerships with the private sector will continue to grow. Business acts as an engine for development, contributes resources and skills for addressing complex global challenges and promotes innovation that can help to optimize United Nations work, in particular at the local level. Many new trends are helping to drive the creation of more innovative and effective forms of collaboration.

1. Converging interests of the United Nations and businesses

15. An increasing convergence of interest between the United Nations and businesses for solving social, environmental and ethical issues is creating new opportunities for cooperation. Private sector thinking has evolved as more companies around the world are making sustainability an integral part of business strategies and operations and no longer viewing it as a philanthropic or marketing activity. Consequently, a growing number of companies are looking to the United Nations for normative guidance and partnership opportunities. Businesses also increasingly desire a greater role in partnership design and decision-making in order to advance impact-driven approaches towards their corporate responsibility collaborations.

16. At the same time, agencies, funds and programmes, with support from Member States, are learning to better leverage the strengths of the United Nations in relation to the private sector, including the Organization's unique values and principles, normative legitimacy, universality and impartiality. Increasingly, the Organization is engaging with the private sector through the key values of respect and support. "Respect" means to do no harm and to abide by international minimum standards. The value confers upon the United Nations a standard-setting role that no other actor can play, underpinning efforts to strengthen the rule of law and realize humanity's shared aspiration to live in peace and dignity. "Support" defines the opportunities for action, collaboration and engagement beyond the avoidance of harm.

17. These developments contribute to the evolution of engagements between the United Nations and its business partners towards deeper, longer-term strategic engagements that better leverage the strengths of both partners towards achieving United Nations goals.

2. Fostering innovation and leveraging technology for achieving development goals

18. To achieve higher levels of impact and scale, many agencies, funds and programmes are working with business partners to design innovative partnership models and approaches. For example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has developed a global network of innovation labs that stimulate and facilitate the adoption of innovative approaches throughout UNICEF.

Box 1
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

"UNHCR Innovation" is an interdepartmental initiative aimed at creating more effective and creative solutions to the challenges that refugees face worldwide. The initiative rethinks how the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works, how it involves refugees in the design of programmes and how it looks at good practices in the humanitarian and private sector world. The strategy is to amplify innovations already under way within UNHCR; connect like-minded innovators (known as "iFellows") to time and resources; and explore innovative practices outside UNHCR. Once challenges are identified by field operations, the initiative works towards solutions through a process of internal and external consultation, which are then tested and refined before being scaled up. The UNHCR Innovation Circle (iCircle) — a fluid group of experts from non-governmental organizations, foundations, academic institutions and the private sector — provides guidance and identifies funding sources for incubating new ideas and projects. An example of the initiative's work is the development of a portable bar code reading device, together with a global package delivery company, which tracks non-food item distributions to individuals and links to the UNHCR ProGres refugee database.

19. Agencies, funds and programmes are also exploring innovative financing models. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, for example, has formed a new private investment fund, together with an international financial services group, for investing in companies that improve AIDS response. New partnership models are also being developed, including umbrella programmes under which a successful partnership model is replicated to achieve wider impact and scalability, such as the Sustainable Supplier Development Programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

20. New technologies are another avenue for promoting innovation and supporting advocacy efforts. The "m-Health" partnership between the International Telecommunication Union, the World Health Organization and other partners, including the private sector, leverages each partner's expertise and uses text messaging and mobile applications to help to combat non-communicable diseases such as diabetes. In addition, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General launched the Global Pulse initiative. Developed together with partners from the private sector, Global Pulse demonstrates how digital data sources and real-time analytics technologies can help policymakers to understand human well-being and emerging vulnerabilities in real time.

3. Engaging with new business partners in dynamic and growing economies

21. Agencies, funds and programmes are increasingly engaging with companies in growing economies such as Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and Turkey. In addition to diversifying partnership portfolios, engagement with companies in dynamic, growing economies can unleash programmatic and partnership innovation.

Companies in these countries are also realizing the value of engaging with the United Nations.

Box 2
Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Government of Turkey, established the UNDP Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development in March 2011. It builds on the country's convening power and dynamic private sector, in addition to the UNDP global mandate to promote market-based solutions to development challenges. It pursues a number of objectives, including that of supporting the development of inclusive and competitive markets and business models; fostering private sector engagement and advocacy around development targets; promoting access to enterprise-related finance; and convening businesses and other actors to expand dialogue and create partnerships. For example, in 2012, it began coordinating an effort for the first private sector development and engagement strategy to be implemented in Somalia, which promotes a series of inclusive business models and value chains that can reduce poverty and accelerate economic recovery.

4. Synchronizing global initiatives with bottom-up approaches

22. According to the 2012 annual survey of companies participating in the Global Compact, 89 per cent of those engaging in partnerships have done so at the local level. This finding emphasizes the considerable opportunities for the United Nations to engage with companies at the country level.

23. Many agencies, funds and programmes are applying and replicating successful partnerships with global partners to local contexts for increasing impact and scale. Global initiatives set up by the Secretary-General, including Every Woman Every Child, Sustainable Energy for All and Global Education First, and Global Compact issue platforms, such as the CEO Water Mandate, Caring for Climate, the Women's Empowerment Principles and the Children's Rights and Business Principles, serve as umbrella frameworks for new local partnerships.

24. At the same time, partnerships between the United Nations and companies at the local level are playing key roles in making progress towards the achievement of development goals. For example, the new partnership strategy of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations stresses both the value of partnerships with smallholder farmers to improve agricultural practices and promote technology transfer, and the need for broader collaboration targeting the entire market system. These parallel top-down and bottom-up approaches are mutually reinforcing and are aimed at working towards a coherent approach for realizing the scale and impact needed for achieving development goals.

C. Overcoming operational challenges for United Nations-business partnerships

25. Within agencies, funds and programmes, there has been considerable progress in overcoming the operational challenges detailed in previous reports. Nevertheless, important hurdles remain in creating more impactful partnerships with the private sector.

1. Creating an enabling environment for more effective and efficient partnerships with the private sector

26. Many agencies, funds and programmes have created strategic frameworks for designing and implementing more effective partnerships with the private sector, based on experience and more mature thinking regarding the value of partnerships. For example, in 2012 the International Fund for Agricultural Development launched a new partnership strategy to support the achievement of their strategic priorities, while UNICEF updated an existing strategic framework to reflect lessons learned over the past years, for example by framing the contribution of partnerships to results and investing strategically in multi-stakeholder approaches.

27. Nevertheless, the most cited hurdles for more effective partnerships remain resources, time and staff constraints, lack of partnership skills within the Organization, bureaucratic requirements and mixed support from senior management. While the global drive towards more accountability and transparency is positive, ensuring results-based programming is challenging. Agencies, funds and programmes report that they are struggling to respond to growing expectations on the part of companies for more strategic, long-term engagements, and partnership practitioners face steep learning curves when dealing with innovative models, such as cause-related marketing, new social or hybrid business models, or innovative financing schemes, such as impact investing.

28. As agencies, funds and programmes operate with reduced operational budgets, optimizing partnership activities with the private sector is necessary in order to do more with less. This requires critical assessment of the costs and benefits of partnership activities, and consideration of implementing fewer, but more strategic and impactful partnerships. United Nations entities should also consider designing and implementing partnerships that build on and coordinate with existing government initiatives to achieve greater impact and scale.

29. The Organization should aim to coordinate partnership activities to avoid duplication and take advantage of complementary mandates, expertise and operational capacity. For example, by focusing the goals of partnership activities on achieving development outcomes instead of organizational outcomes, such as budget support, agencies, funds and programmes can more effectively identify where internal competencies exist and where partnerships with the private sector can add value.

30. While some agencies, funds and programmes have hired more staff with private sector experience, there remain areas for improvement. For example, further efforts are needed to optimize internal processes for partnership approval that maintain high standards of due diligence, but reduce transaction costs. The Organization could better utilize the business.un.org website to profile partnership needs and develop more proactive strategies for pre-screening and approaching

potential partners that can best contribute to achieving goals. Plans to redesign business.un.org should increase the number of monthly visitors and partnership proposals.

2. Promoting and improving monitoring and evaluation

31. Effective monitoring and evaluation processes are critical for tracking the input and contributions of each partner, meeting the reporting needs of both the United Nations and private sector and determining partnership impact. Over the past years, evaluation and impact assessment have received more attention within the United Nations system, also as a result of demand from private sector partners for more measurable indicators of success. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for example, is implementing a revised strategy that includes an annual review of its partnerships to critically assess which engagements to stop, maintain or scale up.

32. Nevertheless, formal evaluation of partnerships remains relatively low throughout the United Nations system, especially with regard to evaluating the impact of partnerships to draw out best practices, measure the contribution towards development goals and help to build the case for the value of partnerships within the Organization.

3. Improving knowledge-sharing

33. The annual meeting of United Nations system private sector focal points represents the key forum for knowledge-sharing among United Nations partnership practitioners. A United Nations system private sector focal points network has been formalized to foster more interaction on key issues between the annual meetings. Other knowledge-sharing mechanisms, such as the UN-Business Focal Point e-newsletter, webinars on partnership issues and informal exchange between practitioners, are valued for disseminating best practices and lessons learned throughout the United Nations system. A new online platform being developed will facilitate the sharing of best practices and enhance communication between private sector partnership practitioners.

34. There is, however, room for improvement, such as by creating incentives within agencies, funds and programmes to share partnership information; developing new tools, such as more case studies of successful examples, shared databases or additional webinars to discuss key issues; and continuing to place priority on hiring staff with private sector experience to better understand the motives and needs of business partners. Reducing the transaction costs of partnership approval and management would allow time for sharing best practices and improving overall knowledge management.

4. Improving internal and external communication

35. Communication and transparency regarding partnership activities within the United Nations and towards Member States is an important means of sharing knowledge and increasing support. Agencies, funds and programmes need to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are made aware not only of the value and successes of partnerships, but also the failures. Moreover, United Nations staff surveyed on business partnerships emphasized the need for clearer signals from Member States and the United Nations leadership that working with the private sector, in particular

with potentially higher-risk, higher-reward companies or sectors, is in the interest of the Organization.

36. External communication with the wider public is also important to provide partnership visibility, and a key incentive for private sector partners. Visibility remains a frequent point of contention, however, especially because the United Nations must ensure that integrity standards, such as non-endorsement and logo policies, are met. United Nations entities are encouraged to ensure that external communication and partnership visibility expectations of both partners are agreed upon in advance in the founding documents. In addition, the United Nations should also explore best practices and lessons learned in leveraging new forms of communication, such as social media, for reporting on partnerships, advocating United Nations goals and reaching critical constituencies (e.g. young people).

5. Improving coordination and creating synergies throughout the United Nations system

37. There has been a considerable increase in the number of partnerships between United Nations organizations and the private sector for achieving development goals. In some areas, this has created competition among agencies, funds and programmes for private sector partners instead of an environment of collaboration and coherence. This is particularly amplified by the reduction in budgets throughout the United Nations system and the resulting need for alternative funding sources. This competition can, for example, lead to an inefficient use of resources as efforts are being duplicated, jeopardize coordinated delivery at the country level through the "One United Nations" framework and lead to confusion among companies regarding how to work with the United Nations.

38. The United Nations should continue to improve efforts, in particular at the country level, for more coordinated and coherent measures that tackle particular problems. By orienting focus towards outcomes relating to the achievement of key goals, the Organization can better coordinate and optimize activities that collectively solve key issues, while also becoming a more attractive partner for the private sector.

III. United Nations integrity measures for private sector partnerships

39. In past reports to the General Assembly, a call has been made for creating and strengthening measures to safeguard the integrity and reputation of the United Nations as a whole, of individual agencies, funds and programmes, and of other stakeholders. Integrity measures are necessary in all instances when the United Nations cooperates with stakeholders, including the private sector. Integrity measures can be defined as policies and processes that safeguard the brand and credibility of the United Nations, such as through partnership guidelines, due diligence screening and monitoring measures.

A. Progress at the United Nations system level

40. The end of 2009 saw the release of the updated Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector, which provide United Nations staff with practical advice for developing more effective private sector partnerships, while ensuring the integrity and independence of the United Nations. Since then, the vast majority of agencies, funds and programmes have used the guidelines as a baseline in designing their own integrity measures. The guidelines have also proven useful as a signal from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on the priority of integrity.

Box 3
Shared due diligence service provider

As a result of demand throughout the United Nations for support in conducting more advanced due diligence screenings on potential business partners, the Foundation for the Global Compact entered into a service agreement with a firm specializing in environmental, social and governance research and analysis. The service provides participating United Nations entities with due diligence information on more than 2,500 listed and non-listed companies in developed markets, as well as more than 800 companies in emerging markets. To date, 11 United Nations entities use this resource.

B. Progress by agencies, funds and programmes

41. Within individual agencies, funds and programmes, integrity measures vary. Building on the minimum standards set out in the Secretary-General's guidelines, in an online survey of 24 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes conducted in 2013, 52 per cent of survey respondents reported having updated or introduced new policies or procedures for due diligence since 2011, which reflected their organizational mandate, operational capacity and strategic framework for partnerships. In the same survey, 83 per cent reported that their respective agency, fund or programme conducted due diligence research itself, while 61 per cent stressed that they also used commercial due diligence service providers. Others cooperated with civil society organizations, engaged informally with other United Nations staff or used a detailed questionnaire to assist with due diligence procedures.

42. Moreover, 74 per cent of survey respondents indicated that their due diligence was not a one-size-fits-all process, but rather a weighted decision on a case-by-case basis depending on the potential partner, the partnership model and partnership goals; and 76 per cent of respondents indicated that their organizational due diligence processes were centralized to ensure coherence. In so-called "grey areas", such as sensitive industry sectors, instances where either allegations of violations of United Nations standards existed, or the potential partner had a negative public reputation, about 75 per cent of entities either conducted additional due diligence or employed additional risk mitigation strategies, such as input from senior

management and legal departments, adding specific protection measures in the partnership agreement or using the partnership to tackle the issue.

43. More than half of the survey respondents indicated that their respective agency, fund or programme monitored the potential risks to the integrity of the United Nations or the respective organization throughout the partnership cycle. They did so by continuously monitoring the commitments and deliverables as set out in partnership legal and governing agreements and by screening existing partners annually. Once risk was determined, its mitigation was handled inconsistently, and must be strengthened to protect the Organization.

C. Progress in the Global Compact

44. The Global Compact conducts an integrity assessment of potential new signatories, which includes cross-checking the United Nations procurement blacklist and screening companies through two separate due diligence service providers. In addition, the Global Compact Local Networks implement due diligence analysis of potential new participants based in their respective countries. Once accepted, participants are required to submit an annual communication on progress detailing their activities in implementing the 10 principles. Participant companies who do not submit this annual report are put on probation. If they remain in non-compliance, they are removed as participants of the initiative.

D. Overcoming challenges for ensuring integrity throughout the United Nations system

1. Ensuring common integrity standards while allowing for differentiation

45. There is no one-size-fits-all process for protecting the integrity of the United Nations, its bodies and its stakeholders. Different types of engagements require different integrity measures, proportional to their overall risk. For example, some private sector partnerships may use due diligence to reject partners with a particular violation of standards, while others may use it to determine to what extent a partnership might be able to address the violation.

46. While the Secretary-General's Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector provide a baseline for common integrity principles, each agency, fund and programme should design a coherent due diligence framework that reflects the unique characteristics of their organizational mandate, operational capacity, partnership strategy and risk tolerance. Additional criteria, such as the alignment of each partners' values, should also be considered. For example, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011, could be used as a tool for screening potential partners or for enhancing standards among current business partners with regard to respect for human rights.

47. Survey respondents and interviewees report that, while many have developed new partnership guidelines and more robust due diligence frameworks, more guidance and coherence is needed with regard to grey areas, in particular, how or whether to partner with companies in certain industry sectors.

2. Shifting from a risk-averse to a risk-managed approach

48. While partnerships with the private sector can help to achieve the mandate of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes, most include some risk. These potential benefits and risks have to be assessed to allow for decisions on whether particular partnership options should be explored. While some United Nations entities, such as UNICEF, have adopted a more risk-managed approach, most agencies, funds and programmes continue to struggle to achieve the necessary internal buy-in, as well as the strategic framework and capacity to implement such an approach.

49. The United Nations should recognize that non-engagement results in untapped potential, given that partnerships with the private sector can improve the way in which the Organization fulfils its mandates and affect the behaviour of potential business partners. However, more guidance is necessary on how to overcome risk-averse patterns without putting the integrity of the Organization at risk.

3. Ensuring capacity, skills and objectivity

50. Many agencies, funds and programmes report not having sufficient resources to conduct due diligence and ensure integrity. In many cases, due diligence is conducted by private sector partnership or fundraising managers, which, in addition to exacerbating time constraints, can create a conflict of interest. United Nations entities should have dedicated and trained staff in order to ensure the necessary skills and objectivity when conducting due diligence.

51. In addition, the Organization should consider developing more effective knowledge management systems to document partnership experiences with, and due diligence analyses of, potential partners in order to reduce transaction costs and risks in the medium to long term. For example, the World Food Programme involves its legal department in the due diligence process and trains staff to use customer relationship management software. This eliminates conflict of interest by spreading the responsibility for analysing risk. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights encourages its partners to address issues uncovered during the due diligence process.

4. Promoting transparency

52. Transparency is an important principle for ensuring that partnership activities, risks, costs and benefits are understood and accepted, and that commitments are honoured. If a proposed partner or partnership includes greater risk, then being transparent about the risk and the process for managing it, as well as being clear about the potential reward of engagement, can ensure that the integrity of the United Nations is maintained. The United Nations should therefore improve the transparency of its partnership activities through more effective internal and external communication with key stakeholders and the general public by disclosing partnership successes and failures. This would also serve the important role of increasing fairness by opening access to partnership opportunities to companies from all regions.

IV. Global Compact Local Networks

53. Global Compact Local Networks are business-led networks of companies and other stakeholders that have committed themselves to advancing the Global Compact's universal principles within their country and encouraging business action in support of United Nations goals. Found in 101 countries, and composed of local and foreign companies and the full range of non-business stakeholders, these networks help to advance corporate sustainability at the local level through learning exchanges, partnerships and dialogues that tackle issues specific to the local context, language and culture. The Local Networks provide an avenue for diffusing United Nations values and principles and facilitating partnerships with businesses on a broad scale.

A. Progress of Global Compact Local Networks

54. The Global Compact and the Local Networks have made considerable progress, in particular, in their growth and expansion, the broadening of the role of Local Networks, refining the management of the networks and in sharing best practices.

1. Growth and expansion of the Local Networks

55. Since the official launch of the first Global Compact Local Network in 2001, the total number of Local Networks has consistently increased. As at January 2013, 101 Networks were in existence: 38 in Europe, 19 in the Americas, 18 in Asia/Oceania, 17 in Africa and 9 in the Middle East. Through their country-level presence worldwide, Local Networks have played a crucial role in making the Global Compact truly global. Most Local Networks have managed to attract a broad set of stakeholders, including companies, business associations, civil society organizations, research institutions, local offices of United Nations entities and development agencies.

2. Evolution in the role of Local Networks

56. The key function of Local Networks is to conduct outreach activities to recruit new business participants; raise awareness of the Global Compact's 10 principles; facilitate dialogue, learning and knowledge-sharing among their participants; and conduct activities aimed at identifying, showcasing and spreading best practices corporate sustainability and action in support of broader United Nations goals.

Box 4

Spreading corporate responsibility and action in support of United Nations goals

China

In 2013, the Global Compact Network in China organized the China Summit on Caring for Climate to raise awareness of climate change, disseminate best practices and enable businesses from China and abroad to tackle the issue together through innovation and cooperation.

Kenya

The Global Compact Network in Kenya organized several events in 2012 to advance human rights and ethical conduct. One event introduced participants to the Global Compact Human Rights Self Assessment Tool and to international trends in managing human rights risks.

Republic of Korea

The Global Compact Network in the Republic of Korea is advancing the "5W" programme to address global water challenges by installing rainwater harvesting systems, promoting village forest conservation and restoration, and reducing illiteracy rates through improved access to education.

Turkey

In 2012, the Local Network in Turkey held its third "Equality Means Business" forum, which included a press conference attended by all signatories to the Women's Empowerment Principles. A guidance booklet for local businesses was also introduced.

United States of America

The Global Compact Network in the United States has convened several events, including on practical steps to increase women's participation on corporate boards and executive committees, and on advancing sustainability in the supply chain.

57. The role of Local Networks has evolved over the years, with them taking on new functions. Many have begun to contribute to national policy dialogues and to explore opportunities for collective action, in particular at the regional level. They also help to maintain the integrity of the Global Compact by screening new signatories and assisting companies in meeting the initiative's integrity measures.

Box 5

Role of Local Networks in creating national strategies for corporate responsibility

In Germany and Ukraine, Global Compact Local Networks have contributed to driving national corporate responsibility strategies by setting up policy dialogues or multi-stakeholder processes on related national policies, formulating recommendations for a detailed action plan and implementing actions aimed at promoting corporate responsibility. In Germany, the Government established a national corporate social responsibility forum in 2009, aimed at shaping the concept and promoting corporate responsibility practices, especially among small and medium-sized companies. An action plan was developed and adopted by

the Government in 2010. The Forum now acts as a supervisory board, while supporting the Government in implementing the action plan. In Ukraine, steps were taken to create a draft national corporate responsibility strategy and an intergovernmental working group has been tasked with developing a national implementation plan.

58. Moreover, Local Networks are beginning to capitalize on their unique presence at the country level. They bring global discussions to the national level, in particular with regard to the development of a post-2015 development framework, and explore their role as facilitators of closer United Nations-business collaboration. A growing number have a fully functional capability to convene, organize and implement massive business-led solutions to sustainability challenges. Already, some 50 country networks are undertaking projects and initiatives in such areas as water access, climate change, women's empowerment, anti-corruption and business for peace. For example, since 2012, Local Networks in Bangladesh, Belgium, Costa Rica, Ghana, India, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Nordic region and Serbia have held events to launch the Children's Rights and Business Principles.

3. Evolution of Local Network management

59. The management of Local Networks occurs through administration at the country level and leadership from the Global Compact Office at the global level. Accordingly, a Local Network is free to choose the governance structure that is most suitable, subject to overall approval by the Global Compact Office.

60. To maintain standards of integrity and accountability, the Global Compact has introduced network categories. Specifically, to become a "formal" network, which is eligible to use the Global Compact Network logo, an annual memorandum of understanding must be signed with the Global Compact Office. In the memorandum, Local Networks are asked to regularly organize activities, elect network representatives, take art in the annual Local Networks Forum and to adopt the integrity measures of the Office. To date, 57 of 101 Local Networks have signed a memorandum, with the remaining 44 not yet meeting all requirements. A number of new elements, including full financial disclosure and measures to enhance accountability, will be introduced to the memorandum of understanding beginning in 2015.

61. The Global Compact Office organizes an annual Local Networks forum, which brings together representatives of Local Networks to share knowledge and to receive an update on the Global Compact in general. The Forum has served as a driver for progress over the years. In 2004, Local Networks agreed upon minimum governance requirements for themselves. In 2005, the Local Networks and the Forum were recognized as two of seven elements of the Global Compact's governance structure. In 2008, Local Networks agreed to sign an annual memorandum of understanding with the Global Compact Office to authorize the use of a network logo. In 2013, the Forum was held alongside the meeting of United Nations private sector focal points, reflecting the increasing importance of Local Networks for United Nations-business collaboration. In addition, 2013 saw the establishment of an advisory group, which will serve as a conduit for Local Networks to raise ideas systematically and to provide guidance to the Office.

B. Overcoming key challenges of Local Networks

62. As the Local Networks continue to grow and gain relevance at the country level, a number of challenges arise and need to be addressed in order to better equip Local Networks for advancing the Global Compact locally and acting as facilitators of United Nations-business collaboration worldwide.

1. Promoting diversified participation and reach

63. Local Networks should be established and strengthened in all regions worldwide. According to the "United Nations Global Compact Local Network Report 2012", currently, eight of the largest networks — representing 38 per cent of all networks — are located in Europe. Efforts are therefore focused on Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, which do not have networks that rank among the 20 largest.

64. The more companies that are engaged in a Local Network, the higher its potential impact on the business community within its country. While some Local Networks have been successful in this regard and attracted hundreds of business participants, others have attracted only a few. The "United Nations Global Compact Local Network Report 2012" states that, in Africa and the Middle East, business participation in the Global Compact fell by 17 per cent in 2012. It is therefore a priority to support small networks in recruiting new participants in these regions.

2. Embedding the Global Compact's principles and partnerships locally

65. Through various activities, Local Networks embed the principles of the Global Compact into strategies, day-to-day operations and the organizational culture of participating companies. By choosing priority areas and establishing working groups that deal with a single topic over a longer period, many Local Networks have successfully fostered more profound debates and, in some cases, inter-network collaboration.

66. Owing to their multi-stakeholder composition, Local Networks are suitable platforms for policy dialogues regarding the development of policies that target the business community, particular sectors and society as a whole and relate to the Global Compact's principles and United Nations goals. Local Networks are encouraged to identify where they can add value to national policy dialogues themselves.

Box 6

Efforts to combat corruption in Brazil, Egypt, India, Nigeria and South Africa

In December 2010, the Global Compact launched anti-corruption projects in Local Networks in Brazil, Egypt, India, Nigeria and South Africa. The projects implement high-impact collective action to combat corruption. By facilitating a continuing dialogue between the private and public sectors, the projects introduced activities that address anti-corruption issues facing the business community, from procurement policies and guidance for small and medium-sized enterprises, to sector initiatives aimed at increasing transparency in sporting events.

3. Stimulating greater activity and impact

67. The growth in the number and size of Local Networks has been a positive development. Some networks struggle to recruit members and scale up their activities, however. To provide an enabling environment for expanding membership and activities, networks that have not done so could strengthen their governance structures by, for example, constructing steering committees, secretariats and possibly legal entities. Aside from ensuring sustainability and integrity, such structures allow for greater involvement of participants and strengthen decision-making mechanisms. In addition to companies, steering committees should involve civil society actors and other stakeholders.

68. Local Networks also have the autonomy to design their own funding model. While some have been successful in doing so, others struggle to ensure the basic funds required for running the network. To minimize financial constraints, Local Networks are advised to combine specific funding, for example, sponsorship for conferences and structural funding, such as membership fees. Beginning in 2013, the funding status of many Local Networks may be positively affected as the Global Compact works to implement a new fundraising model in collaboration with them.

4. Facilitating knowledge-sharing between Local Networks

69. Interaction between Local Networks is increasing, both bilaterally and at the regional level. Regional gatherings are usually organized by networks with similar goals or cultural contexts to share knowledge and facilitate regional collaboration around particular thematic issues. While these trends of closer collaboration are promising and signal shared ownership, differences between regions exist. The Global Compact therefore provides an incentive for collaboration between networks, for example, by catalysing links between Local Networks with the same thematic priorities. For example, in 2012, representatives of the Global Compact Local Network in Mexico and a participant company visited the Chilean Local Network to learn about its management model and to share experiences. The visit promoted closer communication between the networks and synergies on development efforts and strategies.

70. The online Global Compact knowledge-sharing system, updated in March 2013, helps Local Networks in sharing and gaining access to information regarding the management and activities of all networks. Some 80 per cent of Local Networks have already reported activities within the system with varying levels of detail. Additional efforts are needed to extract best practice examples from the system.

5. Facilitating partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector

71. As an interface between local companies and the United Nations, Local Networks are well positioned to act as facilitators of closer United Nations-business collaboration. Some partnership projects have been implemented successfully by Local Networks. In the light of the growing demand for cross-sector cooperation, Local Networks could considerably increase their engagement in this field by advertising the benefits of partnering and exploring opportunities for collaboration in their region. As several United Nations agencies, funds and programmes report a lack of skills and capacity to implement partnerships at the local level, the United Nations could also explore how Local Networks can support the local application of global partnerships and how additional resources could be raised to fulfil this task.

72. The Global Compact is advancing partnership facilitation through Local Networks, such as by organizing training programmes for network representatives on partnering issues. To further build capacity and strengthen the ties between Local Networks and the United Nations, more training will follow at the regional level. Subsequent annual forums may be held, together with meetings of United Nations system private sector focal points.

V. Conclusion

73. **With a renewed emphasis on partnership resulting from the continuing discussions around a post-2015 development framework, the United Nations is uniquely positioned to act as a bridge-builder to various sectors, in particular the private sector, and to challenge them to participate in the achievement of development goals. Progress at the system level, in addition to within agencies, funds and programmes, has further equipped the United Nations to play this critical role. In particular, the United Nations continues to build high-level support for more effective collaboration, as evidenced by the participation and resulting commitments undertaken at the Corporate Sustainability Forum organized in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.**

74. **The United Nations must continue to push forward with new, improved and diversified forms of collaboration with the private sector to achieve a lasting impact and promote United Nations goals. This includes taking advantage of impactful partnership opportunities that arise as a result of new trends, as well as the evolving role and expanding importance of Global Compact Local Networks at the country level. By continuing to shift from a risk-averse to a more risk-managed approach, the United Nations is successfully positioning itself to more strategically leverage its normative strength and reputation towards influencing business behaviour, while respecting high standards of integrity.**

75. **Taking advantage of progress made and strengthening the effectiveness of the business contribution to United Nations goals requires that collaboration be carried out on a greater scale, making the transition from incremental progress to transformative impacts. Doing so will require aligning and scaling up corporate efforts within a global architecture designed to drive business action and partnerships on a massive scale, as recently launched by the Global Compact, and integrating this with multi-stakeholder partnership efforts involving Governments, civil society, philanthropies and academic and scientific organizations, as facilitated by the proposal of the Secretary-General for a partnership facility. This will require strengthening Global Compact Local Networks and global issues platforms, increasing the number of companies globally committed to embedding universal principles into their operations and ensuring that corporate commitments to action are transparent and accountable.**

76. **Global Compact Local Networks should stimulate greater activities locally, promote diversified participation and aspire to greater embedding of the 10 principles locally, balance global leadership with local ownership and facilitate knowledge-sharing and new partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector.**

77. **The United Nations must also continue its efforts to overcome operational challenges that hinder more effective United Nations-business partnerships. Moreover, as the United Nations pushes forward with more innovative types of partnerships, it must ensure a balance of strict standards of integrity and flexibility among agencies, funds and programmes. This includes improving the capacity of United Nations staff to conduct due diligence of potential partners and to promote partnership transparency and accountability.**

78. **To take full advantage of current opportunities to engage with the private sector more effectively, it is critical that the United Nations apply best practices and lessons learned throughout the system. That includes the need to address the recommendations submitted herein.**